

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Kremmling Field Office
P.O. Box 68
Kremmling, CO 80459**

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-LLCON02000-2012-051-CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER:

PROJECT NAME: Walden Hollow Sanitation Harvest Sale

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T. 2 N., R. 76 W., Section 23; Grand County, Colorado; 6th Principal Meridian.

APPLICANT: BLM

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to harvest dead, diseased and wind throw susceptible trees adjacent to private property in the Walden Hollow area near Lake Granby. Although these forested stands are primarily comprised of mature lodgepole pine, other tree species, mainly aspen, Douglas-fir, and subalpine fir, are also present. Recent field visits have found that the majority of the mature lodgepole pine in the area has experienced high rates of mortality due to the mountain pine beetle (MPB) epidemic and much of the surviving lodgepole is infected with dwarf mistletoe (DMT). Although distribution is sporadic, there has been a recent influx of lodgepole pine seedlings in the understory. This is a result of increased sunlight reaching the forest floor as pine needles and small branches have fallen from dead trees. Landowners surrounding the BLM parcels have implemented forest management treatments on their lands to salvage dead timber, reduce hazardous fuels, and promote regeneration of lodgepole pine and aspen.

There was an environmental analysis number CO-018-98-54-EA signed in 1998 that proposed thinning and salvaging MPB killed trees in section 23. The proposed unit was approximately 115 acres in size and was never treated due to access issues. This current analysis would incorporate the past environmental analysis and would add 61 acres of sanitation salvage that borders the Smith ranch to the east. The Colorado State Forest Service is currently working with the Smith ranch to treat forested acres in section 24, and have contacted the BLM in regards to treating the adjacent public lands.

The BLM is proposing to use mechanical treatment to harvest dead, currently infested and wind throw susceptible trees in a unit that is approximately 176 acres in size (see map). These acres would be treated through timber sale contracts, vegetative contracts, or by other means (e.g. stewardship contracts, service contracts, or BLM crews). The treatments would be implemented with conventional, ground-based logging equipment and/or by hand crews with chainsaws. It is

anticipated that the activities described in the proposed action would be completed in 4-5 years, although monitoring could continue for some time after that. This sale would most likely be negotiated with the Smith Ranch since there is no public access to the sale area. Trees that would likely be wind-thrown, if left standing after harvest, would be cut as well (mostly large subalpine fir and Douglas-fir). The primary purpose of the project is to remove diseased, dead, and dying trees to reduce the spread of dwarf mistletoe to recently established seedlings, and to salvage dead and dying trees while they still retain some value. The treatment would also reduce the buildup of hazardous fuels and facilitate healthy regeneration on public lands adjacent to private lands while, at the same time, retaining live healthy trees that remain on the site.

All lodgepole pine trees that are five inches or greater DBH (diameter breast height), as well as, other conifer trees that are nine inches or greater DBH and meet the above criteria, would be designated by the BLM for removal. Lodgepole pine trees that are four inches DBH or less and other conifer trees that are less than nine inches DBH may be removed by the Purchaser or in a subsequent treatment if they are dead, disease/insect infested, or otherwise damaged. Healthy live lodgepole pine less than five inches DBH and other conifer trees, as well as aspen, would be retained where feasible.

Some temporary or snow road construction is anticipated, although the Purchaser may decide to skid longer distances instead. Approximately seven miles of existing county roads provide access to the private road spurs. Private roads provide access to the units and proposed temporary roads. There are existing native surface road spurs that branch off of the existing private road that would provide access to the units. Approximately a half mile of temporary roads may be constructed on private and public lands from existing spurs. If temporary roads are constructed they would be closed by the purchaser following harvest operations. Temporary roads would be outskid, and roads and landings would be scarified, as necessary. Temporary roads, landings and, as necessary, major skid trails, would be seeded with a BLM-approved mixture of forbs and grasses by the Purchaser. Temporary roads, or portions thereof, would also be slashed-in.

All or portions of the existing jeep trail on the BLM parcel may be improved to facilitate access into the unit. These roads would be closed in the same manner as any temporary roads following harvest. Existing private roads are currently maintained on a regular basis. Permission from the private landowners has been given to BLM for timber harvest use. Frequency of maintenance may need to be increased with initiation of logging operations. Operations would be done with standard ground-based commercial logging equipment.

Cull logs and tops of trees would be offered for sale as biomass. Remaining slash would be piled and burned, placed on temporary roads, or lopped and scattered. Following the completion of harvest, piles would be burned during the winter by the BLM when adequate snow depth is present and consistent with burn plan requirements and burning permit stipulations.

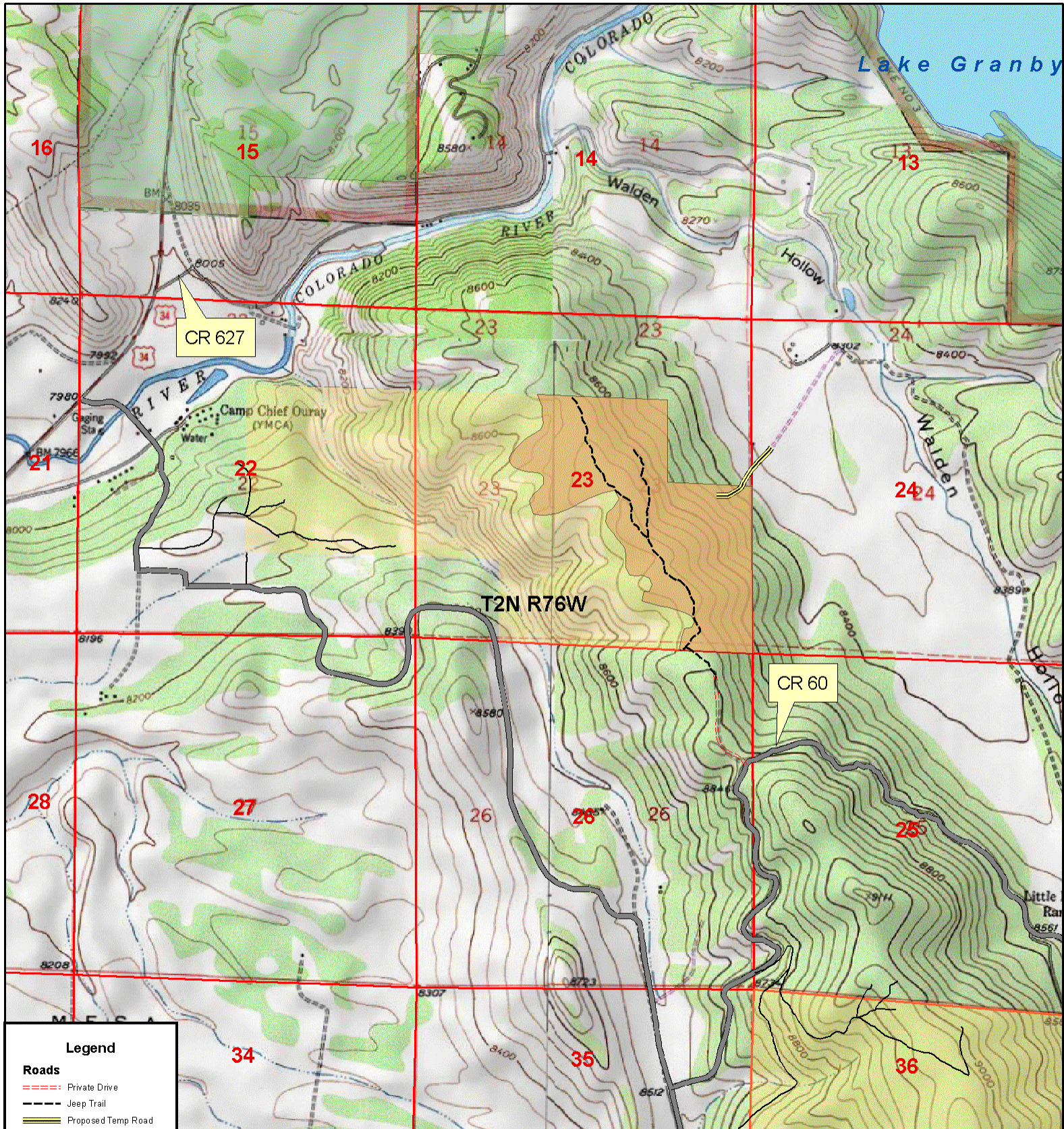
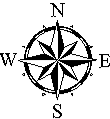
Post-harvest treatments may include a release and weed/thinning treatment (i.e. felling of residual undesirable live trees), and noxious weed control. The BLM would monitor disturbed areas for noxious weeds for two growing seasons after project completion. If noxious weed control is found to be necessary, actions would be coordinated by the BLM.

Design Criteria of the Proposed Action:

1. Locate, flag, and protect any survey monuments (brass cap monuments, bearing trees, private monuments, etc.) that may exist in this project area.
2. Inspect disturbed areas for noxious weeds for two growing seasons after the project is completed. BLM Forestry staff would monitor this and coordinate with weed control, as needed.
3. Maintain a 50 foot buffer away from riparian and wetland areas and not work off-road when ground conditions are wet.
4. Flag or paint trees along the boundaries of the treatment areas near private lands prior to implementation to avoid trespass onto private lands.
5. Fences damaged from the timber harvest operation would be fixed by the contractor.
6. All temporary road construction would only occur during periods with dry soil conditions.
7. Construction of snow roads would not involve soil disturbance.
8. Winter logging would occur only when ground is frozen.
9. Following sale closure, the area would be monitored for two years to determine if fencing and signage need to be installed at the BLM boundary by the BLM to prevent new route establishment or unauthorized motorized or mechanized use since these routes are not be part of the public transportation system.



Walden Hollow Proposed Salvage



Legend

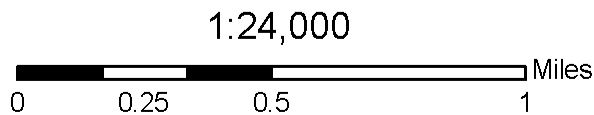
Roads

- Private Drive
- Jeep Trail
- Proposed Temp Road
- Major Road
- Primitive Road
- Proposed Salvage Unit
- Reservoirs

Land Status

- Bureau of Land Mgt
- US Forest Service
- Private
- Sections

Acreage
Proposed Unit
Total= 176 acres



Maps: Granby, Shadow Mountain, Strawberry Lake, Trail Mountain
BLM, Kremmling FO, M. Schiltz 8/27/2012
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No Warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the Accuracy, Reliability, or Completeness of this Data for Individual Use or Aggregate Use with Other Data.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with (43 CFR 1610.5-3, BLM 1601.08) the following plan:

Name of Plan: Land Use Plan Name: Kremmling Resource Management Plan (RMP), Record of Decision (ROD)

Date Approved: December 19, 1984: Updated February 1999. The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decisions(s):

Decision Number/Page: II-6, page 10

Decision Language: “To manage all productive forest land that is suitable for producing a variety of forest products on a sustained yield basis. This action will create a healthy forest environment through continued forest management practices.”

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: The Proposed Action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.0, Section C (9), “Commercial and non-commercial sanitation harvest of trees to control insects or disease not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than 0.5 miles of temporary road construction”.

The Proposed Action has been reviewed with the list of extraordinary circumstances (43 CFR 46.215) described in the table below.

Extraordinary Circumstance	YES	NO
a) Have significant adverse effects on public health and safety.		X
b) Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
c) Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		X
d) Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
e) Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in		X

Extraordinary Circumstance	YES	NO
principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		
f) Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
g) Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau of office.		X
h) Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
i) Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
j) Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.		X
k) Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.		X
l) Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.		X

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

The Proposed Action was presented to, and reviewed by, the Kremmling Field Office interdisciplinary team on 8/28/2012. A complete list of resource specialists who participated in this review is available upon request from the Kremmling Field Office. The table below lists resource specialists who provided additional remarks concerning cultural and paleontological resources, hydrology, invasive species, access and transportation, and special status species.

Name	Title	Resource	Date
Bill B. Wyatt	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Tribal Consultation	11/16/2012
Bill B. Wyatt	Archaeologist	Paleontology	11/16/2012
Megan McGuire	Wildlife Biologist	Special Status Wildlife Species	11/15/2012
Paula Belcher	Hydrologist	Soil, Water, Air, and Riparian	09/25/2012
Zach Hughes	Natural Resource Specialist	Invasive Species	11/13/2012
John Monkouski	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Access/Transportation, Recreation, Noise, Wilderness	11/9/2012

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: A Class III cultural resource inventory (CR-13-05) was conducted. No cultural resource sites were located. The proposed action is a **no effect**, there are **no historic properties** that would be affected.

Native American Religious Concerns: Tribal consultation was conducted with the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe on February 7, 2012. Consultation with the Northern Ute Tribe, Southern Ute Tribe, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, and Northern Arapaho Tribes was initiated on March 28, 2012.

COMPLIANCE PLAN: Contract administration would occur on an on-going basis throughout the life of a sale, service, or stewardship contract. Purchasers and/or contractors would be subject to the stipulations and provisions contained within their contracts. On-going compliance inspections and monitoring will be conducted by the BLM Kremmling Field Office staff during and after construction. The BLM would monitor disturbed areas for noxious weeds for two growing seasons after project completion. Monitoring would also occur after the project to ensure that there is no unauthorized motorized use occurring within the area. If noxious weed control is necessary, BLM would coordinate that treatment.

NAME OF PREPARER: Tom Adamson

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Susan Cassel

COMPLIANCE WITH NEPA: The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9 (C)(9), "Commercial and non-commercial sanitation harvest of trees to control insects or disease not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than 0.5 miles of temporary road construction." None of the following extraordinary circumstances in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply. This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The Proposed Action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.215 apply.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: The Walden Hollow Sanitation Harvest project was listed in the Kremmling Field Office NEPA Register on 8/28/2012.

ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES: The decision described in this document is a forest management decision and is subject to protest by the public. In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR Subpart 5003 Administrative Remedies, protests of this decision may be filed with the authorized office, David Stout, within 15 days of the publication

date of the notice of decision/timber sale advertisement in the Middle Park Times, Granby, Colorado.

Title 43 CFR §5003.3 subsection (b) states: “Protests shall be filed with the authorized officer and shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision.” This precludes the acceptance of electronic mail (email) or facsimile (fax) protests. Only written and signed hard copies of protests that are delivered to the Kremmling Field Office will be accepted. The protest must clearly and concisely state which portion or element of the decision is being protested and the reasons why the decision is believed to be in error.

Title 43 CFR §5003.3 subsection (c) states: “Protests received more than 15 days after the publication of the notice of decision or the notice of sale are not timely filed and shall not be considered.” Upon timely filing of a protest, the authorized officer shall reconsider the project decision to be implemented in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available to him. The authorized officer shall, at the conclusion of the review, serve the protest decision in writing to the protesting party(ies). Upon denial of a protest, the authorized officer may proceed with the implementation of the decision as permitted by regulations at Title 43 CFR §5003.3 subsection (f).

If no protest is received by the close of business (4:30 PM) within 15 days after publication of the decision notice, this decision will become final. If a timely protest is received, the project decision will be reconsidered in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available, and the Kremmling Field Office will issue a protest decision.

For further information, contact David Stout, Field Manager, P.O. Box 68, 2103 East Park Avenue, Kremmling, Colorado 80459-0068.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: ___/s/ Susan Cassel_____
Associate Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 11/16/12